

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



STATE OF ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT OF LAW
12 75 W. WASHINGTON STREET
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2926
WWW.AZAG.GOV

ANDREA M. ESQUER
PRESS SECRETARY
PHONE: (602) 542-8019
CELL PHONE: (602) 725-2200

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Scam Alert

Terry Goddard Warns Consumers about Tax "Phishing" Scam

(Phoenix, Ariz. – March 1, 2006) Attorney General Terry Goddard today cautioned Arizona consumers to beware of an Internet "phishing" scam using emails that appear to come from the Internal Revenue Service, asking for personal financial information.

Many of the phony emails involve what looks like a 1099 form detailing non-payroll income in an attempt to gain consumers' attention and their financial data. Consumers are also receiving fraudulent electronic mail with what appears to be an IRS letterhead that says the taxpayer is eligible for a refund and providing what it says is an IRS Web site to visit for more information. The site is phony.

"This is a seasonal scam, aiming to exploit the fact that at least half of all taxpayers will file their returns electronically this year, and many are eager to receive refunds," Goddard said. "But the IRS will not contact taxpayers by email, and consumers should know what 1099 forms they will be getting to file with their tax returns. As the April 15 tax deadline approaches, people can expect to see more of these phony notices."

Goddard offers the following tips to consumers:

- Beware of emails that appear to be from your bank, a credit card company, or government agency requesting confidential information such as account numbers, passwords or Social Security numbers. Legitimate financial institutions and government agencies will not use electronic mail to ask for this information.
- If you want to confirm whether the IRS is asking for information, contact the agency directly by phone. Arizona consumers can call Live Telephone Assistance at 1-800-829-1040 (TDD: 1-800-829-4059)

If you believe you have been a victim of fraud, please contact the Arizona Attorney General's Office at 602.542.5763 in Phoenix; 520.628.6504 in Tucson; or 1.800.352.8431 outside the metro areas. If you would like to file a complaint in person, the Attorney General's Office has 19 satellite offices throughout the state with volunteers available to help. Locations and hours of operation are posted on the Attorney General's Web site at www.azag.gov.

###.

